



A.T. & T.'S LISTENING ROOM
Most avid of them all.



EAVESDROPPERS' LOCKED DOOR

INVESTIGATIONS

The Wiz That Was

The once honorable profession of wizardry, which has declined in prestige ever since Merlin succumbed to the Lady of the Lake, may have been permanently discredited some 14 centuries later by the combination of television and Robert M. Shelton Jr. Though impeccably accredited as Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, Shelton, 37, a semiliterate, ferret-faced Alabamian, failed so completely last year to cast a spell on either the TV audience or the House Un-American Activities Committee that he was widely tuned out by the former and charged by the latter with contempt of Congress. Specifically, the committee charged him with refusing, under subpoena, to turn over Klan records.

Last week in Washington's Federal District Court, Shelton was found guilty on the contempt charge by a jury composed of nine whites and three Negroes. The diminished wiz now plans an appeal based on the First, Fifth and 14th Amendments—"same ones the nigras been using."

The Girl from B.E.L.L.

Everybody knows about bugged martini olives, the mike in the mattress, and all the other electronic snooping devices that prey upon the unwary and unwise. Last week the U.S. public learned that the most avid eavesdropper of all is not the CIA or SMERSH but good grey Mother Bell—the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. "During 1965," said Missouri's Democratic Senator Edward V. Long, "A.T. & T. monitored 36 million calls. No phones were exempt; Governors and other elected officials" were subject to phone tapping. "Even the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission," said Long, "didn't

know the monitoring was going on until last month."

Listening Rooms. Testifying before Long's Senate Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure, which has been studying organized invasions of privacy for the past two years, A.T. & T. Vice President Hubert L. Kertz admitted that the Bell (obviously an acronym for Beware Eager Little Listeners) system has condoned such eavesdropping for more than 60 years. But he had a different name for it, "service observing," a sort of quality-control system conducted in 2,200 locked "listening rooms" across the U.S. When Kertz insisted that the service observers did not actually listen to conversations, Long retorted, "Would you tell me that the operators are developed to the extent that they just hear the sound but are not conscious of the words or what is being said on that call?"

Long also got into an angry exchange with Edward Hanify, who as attorney for a New England T. & T. official denied that federal agents had been admitted to listening rooms in Boston. Exploded Long: "Mr. Attorney, you don't know what you are talking about. We have very definite information that certain federal agencies have had their employees in there and have used those rooms for monitoring purposes." Long did not identify the agencies, but in all likelihood he meant the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service. In Nevada, for instance, a former casino owner is suing the FBI and the Central Telephone Co. for \$4,500,000 on charges of illegally eavesdropping on his phone conversations.

Twelve-Second Snoop. By a curious coincidence, A.T. & T. changed some of its monitoring equipment last June 1, and the smaller General Telephone & Electronics Corp. followed suit shortly afterward—just about the time the Senate was launching its inquiry—in order to permit the Bellwether to catch only the first twelve seconds of a long-distance call. Nevertheless, Long still intends to propose what he describes as "comprehensive legislation to protect our citizens' privacy."